

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of presenting information regarding products, suppliers and offerors
to users in a virtual shopping mall on a communications terminal, said
5 communications terminal having a user graphical display, a user input, and a
memory, said method comprising:

storing in said memory a set of mall data objects, said mall data objects
comprising a graphical map of a virtual shopping mall, said map having a
coordinate system associated with positions within the shopping mall, and a
10 plurality of multimedia data objects indexed to said coordinate system;

assigning a customer an initial position having a set of coordinates
within the shopping mall;

presenting at least one multimedia data object to a user indexed to said
initial position;
15 updating said initial position to a subsequent position responsive to a
position change command from a user via said user input; and

presenting at least one multimedia object to a user indexed to said
subsequent position.
2. The method as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said steps of presenting a
20 multimedia data object comprise presenting a visual image of a mall or store
interior.

3. The method as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said steps of presenting a visual image of a mall or store interior further comprise the steps of:

providing a customer-selectable hot spot within said visual image; and
updating said customer's position responsive to selection of said hot
5 spot.

4. The method as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said steps of presenting multimedia data objects comprise presenting a sound clip representative of background sound within a mall or store interior.

5. A computer readable medium encoded with software for presenting
10 information regarding products, suppliers and offerors to users in a virtual shopping mall on a communications terminal, said communications terminal having a user graphical display, a user input, and a memory, said software when executed by said communications terminal causing the communications terminal to perform the following actions:

- 15 storing in said memory a set of mall data objects, said mall data objects comprising a graphical map of a virtual shopping mall, said map having a coordinate system associated with positions within the shopping mall, and a plurality of multimedia data objects indexed to said coordinate system;

- providing a map of a virtual shopping mall, said map having a
20 coordinate system associated with positions within the shopping mall;

assigning a customer an initial position having a set of coordinates within the shopping mall;

presenting at least one multimedia data object to a customer indexed to said initial position;

updating said initial position to a subsequent position responsive to a position change command from a user received via said user input; and

5 presenting at least one multimedia data object to a customer indexed to said subsequent position.

6. The computer readable medium as set forth in Claim 5 wherein said software for performing the action of presenting a multimedia data object comprises software for presenting a visual image of a mall or store interior.

10 7. The computer readable medium as set forth in Claim 6 wherein said software for presenting a visual image of a mall or store interior further comprises software for performing following actions:

 providing a customer-selectable hot spot within said visual image; and

 updating said customer's position responsive to selection of said hot

15 spot.

8. The computer readable medium as set forth in Claim 5 wherein said software for presenting a multimedia data object comprises software for presenting a sound clip representative of background sound within a mall or store interior.

9. A geographically-centered shopping mall browser for presenting information
20 regarding products, suppliers and offerors to users in a virtual shopping mall using a communications terminal, said communications terminal having a user

graphical display, a processor , a user input, and a memory, said shopping mall browser comprising:

a set of mall data objects disposed in said memory, said mall data objects comprising a graphical map of a virtual shopping mall, said map having
5 a coordinate system associated with positions within the shopping mall, and a plurality of multimedia data objects indexed to said coordinate system;

a mall map displayer for showing on said communications terminal graphical display a geographical organization of a virtual mall contents;

a customer position initializer for assigning an initial user position
10 having a set of coordinates within the virtual shopping mall;

a position tracker for updating said initial position to a subsequent position responsive to a position change command from a user via said user input; and

a multimedia data object presenter for presenting at least one
15 multimedia object to a customer indexed to said initial position or said subsequent position.

10. The shopping mall browser as set forth in Claim 9 wherein said multimedia data object presenter is adapted to present a visual image of a mall or store interior.

20 11. The shopping mall browser as set forth in Claim 10 wherein said multimedia data object presenter is further adapted to provide a customer-selectable hot

spot within said visual image and to update a customer position responsive to selection of said hot spot.

12. The shopping mall browser as set forth in Claim 9 wherein said multimedia object data presenter is adapted to present a sound clip representative of background sound within a mall or store interior.

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